

COMMENTS ON THE U.S.-LED WAR AGAINST IRAQ

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The facts and the truth about the raging bloody conflict between the U.S.-led forces and Iraq over the issue of Kuwait and related issues need to be clarified in view of the obfuscation, slant and outright lies unleashed by the officialdom and dominant mass media of the United States and its camp followers.

The United States is utterly condemnable for launching a war of aggression against Iraq, wantonly bombing not only military targets but also centers of population and other nonmilitary targets such as economic facilities, educational and scientific centers and religious sites.

The stand of peace-loving peoples is to call for the end of the U.S.-led aggression, which far outstrips the charge of aggression against Iraq in Kuwait. The immediate way to peace (the end of the war and the economic sanctions) is clear. There must be an international conference on the Middle East to equally apply U.N. resolutions and to carry out inter alia the longstanding ones with respect to Palestine.

A fairly arranged U.N. or Arab peacekeeping force, independent of the U.S. and Britain but mutually acceptable to the U.S.-led coalition and Iraq can take the place of the U.S.-led forces on the border of Saudi Arabia and the Iraqi troops in Kuwait. The people of Kuwait must be allowed to express clearly whether they wish to be part of Iraq or not and whether they wish to remain under the rule of the al-Sabha family or not.

If in one way or another Kuwait remains an independent state, the outstanding issues about borders, mutual financial obligations and the Rumaila oilfield must be negotiated and agreed upon by Iraq and Kuwait.

In launching the war of aggression, the United States has fully unfolded -- by its excessively brutal actions and arrogant pronouncements -- its own imperialist objectives which are entirely different from those of the U.N. Security Council in its resolutions regarding Kuwait.

U.S. objectives are the following:

1. To destroy the economy and military capability of Iraq, replace the Saddam regime with a pro-U.S. puppet regime, maintain the military superiority of Israel against the Arab countries and further strengthen U.S. hegemony in the Middle East; and
2. To increase U.S. control over the oil resources of the Arab nation not only by reclaiming Kuwait but also by seizing Iraqi oil resources and exacting payments for the costs of war, reconstruction, military resupply and the Arab people's own politico-military subjugation.

The foregoing objectives are in the context of the "new world order" pronounced by U.S. President Bush. This so-called post-cold war order presumes the absence of challenge by another superpower to the U.S., the economic and financial subjugation of the South and the East by the capitalist powers and

the unrestrained use of military force against any country or nation that dares to resist imperialist domination.

To understand the roots and objectives of the U.S. war of aggression, one must look back to the course of the Iraqi military buildup. Consequent to the fall of the Shah of Iran and the Iranian people's rejection of U.S. interests in oil and military sales, Germany, United States, Britain and France encouraged and supported Iraq against Iran in military buildup prior to and in the course of the Iran-Iraq war. Up to recently, the West profited from military and related sales to Iraq.

The United States and Britain became worried about the anti-Israel stance and the efforts of the Saddam regime to build nuclear, chemical and biological means of warfare (like what the U.S. and Israel have); and sought to debilitate and discourage Iraq from building an independent military capability. Kuwait and Saudi Arabia (Iraq's big creditors) were used to put the financial squeeze on her by demanding loan payments and refusing to extend new loans.

The subservience of the al-Sabha family to the Anglo-American interests and its arrogance towards the Saddam regime merely served to arouse Iraq to raise questions of equity against Kuwait and eventually to reassert historical claims on the latter.

One of the main questions of equity involves the demand of Iraq on Kuwait to account and pay for the overpumping of oil from the Rumaila oilfield; and to count the payment off the huge Iraqi debt to Kuwait. In the course of the Iran-Iraq war and thereafter, Kuwait had been pumping oil from the Rumaila oilfield as much as it wished although more than eighty percent of this field lies in Iraqi territory.

Iraqi troops moved into Kuwait purportedly upon the request of Kuwaiti anti-royalists and people soon after the al-Sabha regime refused Iraq's proposal to reduce oil production and to raise within the OPEC the price of oil to the level of US\$28 per barrel. Further on, the antiroyalist Kuwaitis and Iraqis decided to restore Kuwait to Iraq.

Kuwait is a state created by British colonialism. Under the Ottoman empire, it clearly belonged to Iraq. Thus, there is a historical basis for the claim of Iraq on Kuwait. Among enlightened Arabs, there is also widespread resentment that Kuwait's claim to national sovereignty coincides with the royal sovereignty of the al-Sabha family which collaborates with the capitalist powers; appropriates income from huge oil resources, roughly 10 percent of the world's; and siphons off this income mainly to banks and firms abroad at the expense of the Kuwaiti and Arab people.

At the root of the current war is the overweening desire of the U.S. and Britain to preserve and strengthen a regional security balance in which their interests and those of Israel are served at the expense of the Palestinian and Arab peoples. Little Kuwait has been used by the U.S. and Britain to put an economic and financial squeeze on Iraq and force her to capitulate to the Anglo-American security scheme for the Middle East.

Instead of succumbing, Iraq under the Saddam regime has chosen to resist the Anglo-American pressures. The contradiction between Israel on the one hand and the Palestinian and Arab peoples on the other hand has been an essential and decisive element in the contradictions between the Anglo-American combine and Iraq as well as between Iraq and Kuwait.

The so-called linkage of the Palestinian issue with the issue of Kuwait is not something thought up by the Saddam regime only after the Iraqi troops marched into Kuwait. This linkage has been there long before. And it is going to be underscored by the escalation of the U.S. war of aggression and the so-far few Scud missiles directed against Israel by Iraq.

The simplistic depiction of Iraq as the aggressor against little Kuwait is deceptive. If not for their pro-Israel and anti-Arab security interests and huge oil interests, the U.S. and Britain would have no incentive to rush into a large-scale war of aggression against Iraq, exceeding the U.N. resolutions and risking greater losses.

The U.S. has flagrantly escalated the stakes and violence of its aggression because these have been in the premeditation of U.S. security and oil interests. It is absurd for anyone to assert that the U.S. has suddenly become the champion of the national sovereignty of the oppressed and exploited. So clear is the hypocrisy of the U.S. The anti-war protestors and the peace-loving people hit the mark when they describe U.S. policy as "blood for oil."

The war could have been easily averted if only the U.S. had agreed to the mutual withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait and Israel from the occupied territories; and to a conference on the Middle East focusing on the Israeli-Palestinian issue. These were demanded by Iraq and all countries and peoples that love justice and peace. In far earlier U.N. resolutions, earlier by more than two decades, the national sovereignty and right of the Palestinian people to their homeland have been upheld. But the U.S. and Israel have consistently worked together to flout these resolutions and deprive the Palestinian people of their rights.

The U.S. has been intransigent in opposing and rejecting every attempt to resolve the Gulf crisis through peaceful negotiations and principled compromise on the basis of all U.N. resolutions pertaining to the Middle East. The U.S. has shot down every diplomatic effort within and outside the U.N. Security Council for the peaceful resolution of the Gulf crisis. It has used bribery and threats to use economic and financial retaliation in order to win over or neutralize other members of the U.N. Security Council.

The U.S. has been overconfident about its hightech military weaponry and the collaboration of the Soviet Union, which proposed the January 15 deadline. But after a week of goldplated hightech warfare, the U.S. has failed to win victory in what it wished to be a war of a few days. The troops, planes and tanks of Iraq are well dug-in in a strategic defensive posture. The U.S. and its allies are devastating Iraq and massacring the Iraqi people in an unprecedented way but are in turn incurring heavy costs as Iraqi anti-aircraft weapons shoot at planes.

The cost of the war for the U.S. and its allies is already US\$1 billion a day. But when the ground action begins, the human, political and economic costs on the side of the U.S.-led coalition will rise and will make the U.S. regret its own arrogance and overeagerness to launch a war of aggression. The Iraqi troops and armed civilian (including Palestinian) volunteers in Kuwait probably number at least 700,000 and outnumber several times the combat troops of the U.S.-led coalition. Out of the 600,000 troops led by the U.S., there are at the most only 200,000 effectives for assault operations on the ground.

The U.S. expectation of victory is based mainly on the use of its hightech weaponry and the massive destruction of Iraq from the air prior to warfare on the ground. However, the most that the U.S. can expect is a pyrrhic victory in reclaiming Kuwait if one considers that the Iraqi troops have a high fighting morale of a national and religious character, have sufficient food stocks for several months and are capable of using anti-tank and anti-air craft weapons prior to the use of their strongest offensive weapons (still held in reserve in accordance with Iraqi defensive strategy) and of destroying the oil wells and facilities in Kuwait prior to defeat.

Iraq can also reasonably aim to defeat the troops of the U.S.-led coalition if they dare to move into Kuwait within a month or two; or to achieve a standoff until the American people and world opinion take George Bush to account for the false promise of quick victory and for the savage and costly yet indecisive hightech warfare. A military standoff translates into a political victory of Iraq and political defeat of the U.S.

In his own desperation, Bush might still threaten to use or actually use tactical nuclear weapons against Iraq although the equivalent of several atomic bombs of the type used on Hiroshima have already been dropped on Iraq to no avail. In fact, the bombing and destruction of Iraq's nuclear reactors by the U.S. is already tantamount to inflicting nuclear damage to Iraq and harming the civilian population in a manner that is incomparable to the few Scud missiles unleashed by Iraq.

Even if the U.S. were to defeat Iraq and install a puppet regime in Baghdad, there is no guarantee for the U.S. to reap benefits all the way, control the Middle East, avoid further costs and stave off U.S. decline on a world scale. For one, the war has already some adverse effect on the demand of the American people to reap the peace dividend from the acclaimed end of the cold war and to solve the deficits problem of the U.S. Instead, the U.S. is again on a momentum of flaunting sheer military power and wasting resources to promote its political and economic interests.

The resistance of Iraq to the dictates and aggression of the U.S. is a signal event of world historic significance. Here is a country made desperate by the world capitalist crisis of overproduction, which has been most manifest in the glut of raw-materials in the third world, specifically the most volatile raw-material commodity, oil.

Exactly at the point when the U.S. and its camp followers are boasting about a new world order, characterized by capitulation and submission to the world capitalist system by countries that used to raise the banner of anti-imperialism or proletarian internationalism, there is resistance from a country like Iraq and a compulsion on the U.S. and its capitalist allies to show once more their aggressive nature.

Whatever way one may describe Saddam Hussein, especially in the consideration of the issue of Kuwait, the U.S. war of aggression and the anti-imperialist resistance of Iraq constitute an outbreak of the grave and deepgoing contradiction between U.S. and other capitalist powers on the one hand and the countries and peoples subjected to unbearable oppression and exploitation by capitalism on the other hand. The current war serves notice to the entire world that the aforesaid contradiction continues to run deep and is volatile and that the anti-imperialist resistance is fuelled by the problems referred to as those of North-South relations and by intolerable political dictates.

Even the membership of Egypt and Syria in the anti-Iraq coalition can be explained in terms of their desperation in the current so-called new world order. Overloaded with foreign loans for consumption

and the military, Egypt has joined the coalition in exchange for the write-off of US\$7 billion debt owed to the U.S. Cut off from Soviet assistance, Syria has also sided with the U.S. in exchange for money from Saudi Arabia and in hope of securing loans from the West.

In a perverse way of thinking, Egypt and Syria argue that if Iraq is beaten in the current war, the anti-Zionist and anti-imperialist cause of the Arab people is served. With no foil to U.S. and Israeli military power and with the increased U.S. control of oil resources in the Middle East, the just cause of the Palestinian and Arab people will be set back but will not cease to make the region combustible. The victory of the U.S. in the war translates into a victory for a Zionist Israel but this will only serve to further inflame the Middle East.

The intolerable impositions of the North on the South and East engender international turbulence and popular resistance. The revolutionary cause of anti-imperialism and socialism is bound to surge forward at a new and higher level in due course.